Dear Friend of the Museum,

The year 2012 is turning out to be an extremely busy year for The Irvine Museum. As we approach our twentieth anniversary, we are working on two major projects that each comprise a book and a retrospective exhibition. The JOHN FROST (1890-1937) book and exhibition is progressing well. Frost was one of our greatest Impressionist painters. The book, written by art historian Phil Kovinick is in production with our long-time graphic designer Lilli Colton. We expect to have the book published by next year. Our second project, the book and exhibition for ARTHUR E. BEAUMONT (1890-1978) is also going well. Beaumont was for many years the official artist of the United States Navy and his dynamic watercolors of Navy warships are known throughout the world. The author, Geoffrey Beaumont, son of the artist, has written an excellent and comprehensive text, and the book will go into production soon after the Frost book is published.

Moreover, we have two traveling exhibitions running concurrently. One, entitled SELECTIONS FROM THE IRVINE MUSEUM, is traveling up the west coast with museum venues such as Monterey, Portland, Bellingham and Bakersfield. The other, entitled CALIFORNIA IMPRESSIONISM, is traveling in the east at major university art galleries, the initial one being the Arthur Ross Gallery of the University of Pennsylvania. There are several other university galleries that have expressed a desire to host the show and we will announce those in the near future.

In September, the museum will open “AUTUMN’S GLORY, WINTER’S GRACE.” This themed show will display many of our best examples of California landscape paintings. The exhibition will continue to January 17, 2013.

I look forward to seeing you in the museum and invite you to participate with us in all our activities, including some special events we have planned for our twentieth anniversary. I will keep you informed as these plans develop.

—James Irvine Swinden, President

CURRENT EXHIBITION

Autumn’s Glory, Winter’s Grace
September 29, 2012 through January 17, 2013

Nature is always with us, and indeed it is within us. It is part of the human collective subconscious. Our affinity with nature is inescapable. The vision of a beautiful day makes us feel uplifted. A day in the country refreshes and restores us. When we can no longer deal with the modern world, with all its stress and pollution, we turn to nature. A blue sky gives pleasure, green grass is calming, fresh air is rejuvenating. Nature is indeed our mother, and we turn to her when we need respite.

In California Impressionism, the principal subject was land, represented as clean and unspoiled with strength and grandeur. The sun shone its light on the land and gave it color; greens of spring, browns of late summer and fall, and everywhere, the deep blue mantle of the sky.
In *Sunset Boulevard*, Los Angeles painter Misha Askenazy paints the heavy run-off from a rain storm in the Hollywood Hills. His bold use of oblique lines and gray colors clearly portray the feeling of a cold, wet stormy day.

Benjamin Brown was one of the earliest professional artists to settle in California (1886). He had patrons in both California and the East. Hoping to encourage more sales, one New York dealer suggested that Brown open a studio there and conceal the fact that he was from California. Brown flatly refused and defiantly began painting the word “California” beneath his signature, affirming his pride in being a Californian.

After completing many years of study in NY, Paul Grimm moved to Hollywood in 1919 and began his art career painting backdrops for the movie studios. In 1932, he settled in Palm Springs and maintained a small studio gallery there. President Dwight Eisenhower, who was a part-time resident of Palm Springs, often visited his studio. Eisenhower once wrote, “I profited from the experience of seeing how a real artist creates the effects he wants.” Grimm spent much of his time painting in the High Sierra, but is best known for his scenes of the changing moods of the Southern California desert.

Paul Lauritz moved to Los Angeles in 1919, and established a studio-home. At first he did plein air painting but discovered that he got a stronger light on the canvas by completing the work in his studio. He used gigantic brushes, pre-war French bristles, and even used them to achieve minute strokes. He also used palette knives and his hand to achieve a textural effect and generally simple, basic colors. In his painting, *Poinsettias*, you see the flower’s spiky petals casting purplish shadows in rhythmic patterns against a wall at the San Juan Capistrano Mission.

While living in Chicago, one of Marion Wachtel’s landscapes caught the eye of a Santa Fe Railroad Vice-President, and he offered her free passage to California in exchange for paintings for their ticket offices. When she arrived in San Francisco in 1903, she studied with William Keith and then moved to Los Angeles where she studied with artist Elmer Wachtel, whom she married in 1904. For 25 years, they painted together in California, Arizona, the High Sierra, the sea coast and Mexico. Her landscapes are remarkable for their breadth and simplicity and the fine uncomplicated sense of composition they reveal. Marion became renowned for her work in watercolor.

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**Featured Works and Artists**

*top:* Mischa Askenazy, *Sunset Boulevard, Rain*, The Irvine Museum

*above:* Benjamin Brown, *Auntumn Glory*, The Irvine Museum

*bellow, from left:* Paul Grimm, *Glacier Palisades, High Sierra*, Private Collection, Courtesy of The Irvine Museum; Marion K. Wachtel, *Long Lake, Sierra Nevada*, The Irvine Museum
On Landscape Painting
by Jean Stern, Executive Director

This fall, our sister museum the Laguna Art Museum in Laguna Beach and the Laguna Beach Plein Air Painters Association, will be hosting the 14th Annual Plein Air Painting Invitational. For one week, from October 14 to 21, 2012, Laguna Beach will turn into an outdoor studio with forty invited artists from throughout the country competing for prestigious prizes and participating in the week-long festivities including public paint outs, environmental awareness activities, and educational events.

Art has always been an important aspect of Laguna Beach. As early as 1886, artists began to paint in this picturesque community. The attraction, from the artists’ point of view was the clear and intense light as well as the sheer beauty of the small coastal village. The unique light, which exists all along the southern California coast, is similar to that of southern France and other Mediterranean locales. It offered large vistas and intense, pure colors, all bathed in the fluidity of natural sunlight.

According to Janet Blake, Curator of Collections at the Laguna Art Museum, the first artist of note to visit Laguna Beach was the English-trained watercolorist Norman St. Clair (1863-1912), who reportedly painted sketches there around 1900, which he later exhibited in San Francisco. Shortly thereafter, two friends, George Garden Symons (1863-1930) and William Wendt (1865-1946) arrived in Laguna for the first time and quickly succumbed to its charms. Symons built a studio home in Arch Beach (now called South Laguna) in 1903, which he visited periodically throughout his career. In August, 1906, when Los Angeles Times art critic Antony Anderson visited Laguna Beach, he reported that Symons was living there “year-round” and that William Wendt, Norman St. Clair and William Swift Daniell (1865-1933) were each obtaining land to build studios. Anderson also noted that Elmer Wachtel (1864-1929), Granville Redmond (1871-1935), Benjamin Brown (1865-1942), William Lees Judson (1842-1928), and Gottardo Piazzoni (1872-1945) had painted in Laguna Beach “in recent years.”

Anderson returned in 1915 and made “the rounds of the new studios, which are strung along the high shore like jewels, from Arch Beach to Laguna Cliffs.” He wryly observed that “today, there must be a hundred canvases that bear the alluring title ‘Rocks at Laguna.’” He then reported at length on a visit to the studio of seascape painter Frank Cuprien (1871-1948) and also on visiting William Swift Daniell and Anna Hills (1882-1930).
In the span of less than ten years, the number of artists living permanently or part-time in Laguna Beach had increased to about 30 or 40. In 1918, Edgar Payne (1883-1947), who had first painted there in 1911, recognized the need for a gallery in which the artists could display and sell their works. Payne persuaded the city council to allow the artists to use the abandoned Old Town Hall.


The exhibition was an immediate success. After three weeks, nearly 2,000 people had signed the guest book. It soon became clear to Anderson that, “even though Laguna Beach is a small place, it is destined to play a large part in the art development, of an art appreciation not only in California but throughout the whole United States.”

In July 1920, it was announced that a special annual exhibition would be established in August, which would thereafter mark the anniversary of the founding of the association. Over the next few years, the Laguna Beach Art Association grew to prominence and attracted such noted artists as Maurice Braun (1877-1941), George Brandriff (1890-1936), Benjamin Brown, Colin Campbell Cooper (1856-1937), Sam Hyde Harris (1889-1977), Thomas L. Hunt (1882-1938), William Lees Judson, Joseph Kleitsch (1882-1931), Jean Mannheim (1862-1945), Arthur G. Rider (1886-1975), Guy Rose (1867-1925), Walter Elmer Schofield (1869-1944), George Gardner Symons, and Karl Yens (1868-1945) to participate in programs and exhibitions.

Eventually, the Laguna Beach Art Association outgrew the temporary gallery in the Old Town Hall and a series of exhibitions were held to raise money to purchase a piece of land and construct a permanent gallery space. In 1926, the association purchased a lot on the south-west corner of Coast Highway and Cliff Drive. On February 16, 1929, the association’s new gallery was officially opened to the public. Over the years, it became the Laguna Beach Museum of Art and in 1986, the building, now known as Laguna Art Museum was expanded to the size it is today.
Educational Outreach Programs
by Dora James, Curator of Education

Earlier this year, The Irvine Museum published a children’s activity booklet, “Fun At The Museum.” The booklet was funded in part by Lisa and Brad Hillgren through a generous grant from The Hillgren Family Foundation Fund at The Orange County Community Foundation and was printed just before the end of this school year.

Beginning this September, all elementary children that visit our museum on a fieldtrip, will receive “Fun At The Museum”, along with pencils, postcards, posters, and a fine art book to share for their class.

The booklet features word games and puzzles that relate to paintings they may have seen on their visit. It also teaches them to identify basic geometric shapes and asks them to find those shapes in the paintings in the booklet. There are also blank pages, framed in gold, that encourage them to draw their own creations.

Please feel free to ask our receptionist for an activity booklet for your little ones when you visit our newest exhibition.

You can help support our education programs by:

• Attending our exhibits
• Serving as an ambassador and sharing information about our museum
• Joining our patron program

To learn, read.
To know, write.
To master, teach.
Irvine Museum Patrons at
the Preview Reception for *Paradise Found*

Beth Knapp and Lisa Hilgren

*from left:* Susan, Caroline, and Cait Williamson

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